

# PROCESSING THERAPEUTIC FORMULA REQUESTS

The Code of Federal Regulations describes the WIC program as “an adjunct to health care.” WIC funds cannot be used directly to provide health care, including clinical or medical nutrition therapy to WIC participants. The WIC program provides basic preventive education, supplemental foods, and individual or group education to *reinforce* diet therapy provided by the health care system. The WIC RD is not expected to challenge a physician’s medical diagnosis or prescription; our role is to educate health care professionals and the public about pediatric nutrition as they provide feedback regarding available formulas, feeding practices and tolerance.

When presented with therapeutic formula requests, the role of a WIC RD (or DN, if trained by the local agency in the therapeutic formula ordering process) is as follows:

**1. Determine if the formula matches the diagnosis.**

Symptoms/diagnosis (Dx) for the prescribed formula must be consistent with indications recommended by the manufacturer. If you have questions regarding the request:

- ✓ obtain consent form from participant to contact medical provider
- ✓ contact the provider for clarification if there are concerns
- ✓ determine whether a contract formula that is available can be issued instead and suggest this to the medical provider
- ✓ if a contract formula cannot be issued, follow procedures for therapeutic formulas printed on FI’s or refer request to State WIC if therapeutic formula cannot be printed on the FI

**2. Refer the WIC participant to apply for Medi-Cal.**

- ✓ Refer the participant to Medi-Cal whenever a therapeutic formula is prescribed.
- ✓ Provide information about how to apply to Medi-Cal if the participant does not have insurance or if the current insurance does not include coverage for formulas (refer to Insurance Resources links).
- ✓ WIC can provide up to three months of prescribed therapeutic formula while Medi-Cal is reviewing the participant’s application.

**3. Determine if the WIC participant is eligible for other healthcare programs.**

Participants with a physical limitation, chronic condition, or developmental disability, may be eligible for Children’s Medical Services (CMS) or Regional Center services. Provide links for these services which include guidelines for eligibility for these programs (refer to Insurance Resources links).

**4. Refer the request to State WIC** for formulas not printed on Food Instruments.

- ✓ Obtain a completed Pediatric Referral form CDPH 247A.
- ✓ Fax completed Pediatric Referral Form, prescription, any other medical documents, and local agency shipping address to the California WIC Program at (916) 440-5581 for review and approval/denial of formulas not available on WIC food instruments.

**5. If approved, distribute State WIC approved therapeutic formula** to the caregiver when shipment is received and explain proper formula mixing, use, storage instructions, and stool changes.

**6. Reinforce special instructions** communicated by the health care provider or by the clinical dietitian to the caregiver.

**7. Review the length of time** the formula will be used, monitor weight/height, and introduce the idea of changing formula or discontinuing use within three months if approved by the provider.